

Before the  
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of	)	
	)	
Upgrade to the Next Generation	)	GN Docket No. 16-142
Digital Television Service	)	
	)	

**COMMENTS OF MEREDITH CORPORATION**

Meredith Corporation, which owns seventeen television stations reaching more than 11 percent of U.S. households, looks forward to increased innovation and enhanced consumer experiences as a result of the Commission’s efforts to provide a path for voluntary transitioning to ATSC 3.0. These comments specifically focus on three issues the Commission outlined for further discussion in a Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (“FNPRM”): (1) exceptions and waivers to the local simulcast requirement; (2) broadcasters’ proposed temporary use of vacant in-band channels during the transition; and (3) the significantly viewed status of transitioning Next Gen stations.<sup>1</sup>

**1. Speed, Flexibility, and Expertise Should Guide the Simulcasting Waiver Process**

The transition to ATSC 3.0 will require unprecedented cooperation, planning, and risk-taking by television stations, vendors, and the Commission. To facilitate this voluntary transition to the benefit of consumers, the Commission should delegate to the Media Bureau the authority to flexibly (and quickly) provide waivers from the simulcasting requirement of the Commission’s transition rules.

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<sup>1</sup> *Authorizing Permissive Use of the “Next Generation” Broadcast Television Standard*, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, GN Docket No. 16-142, FCC 17-158 at ¶¶ 121-131 (Nov. 20, 2017).

The Media Bureau has the requisite expertise, history, and understanding of the broadcast television market to expeditiously review and decide upon waiver requests. The Bureau should grant all waiver requests that further the voluntary transition to ATSC 3.0 without materially burdening or depriving consumers.<sup>2</sup> Speed is important, as other “daisy chain” elements may be waiting on a waiver request. Meredith Corporation suggests that waivers can and should be decided upon in 30 days from filing or be deemed granted.

Since the transition to ATSC 3.0 has not yet begun, it is hard to comprehend for what reasons waivers may be required. We know that, for example, waivers may be required due to content licensing or intellectual property issues, bandwidth concerns, or for implementation of new services not available currently. As it fields waiver requests, the Bureau will be able to develop further standards based on the nature of the requests.

## **2. Television Stations Should be Permitted to Use Vacant Channels Temporarily**

To the extent that vacant, in-band channels are available, the Commission should favorably act upon Special Temporary Authority requests for temporary use of those channels during the transition to ATSC 3.0. The Commission and its staff have decades of experience in evaluating Special Temporary Authority requests, and can do so here. Grant of such requests will further the success of licensed services and the enhancements that ATSC 3.0 will bring to consumers. Unlicensed services have no expectation of continued use, as they are secondary to licensed services.

## **3. The Transition Itself Should Not Affect Significantly Viewed Status**

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<sup>2</sup> For example, Meredith Corporation agrees with Pearl TV that the Commission should issue a blanket waiver for Class A and Non-Commercial Educational (“NCE”) stations from the simulcasting requirement.

Given the temporary nature of the transition to ATSC 3.0, the Commission should not at this time disturb any current Significantly Viewed status as a result of efforts made during the ATSC 3.0 transition. After the transition is complete and the dust has settled, then it would be appropriate for the Commission to review requests to change Significantly Viewed status (either way) based on new ATSC 3.0 signals.

### **CONCLUSION**

Meredith Corporation again commends the Commission on its efforts to bring greater quality and quantity to the public via a voluntary transition to ATSC 3.0. We encourage the Commission to delegate to the Media Bureau a rapid, flexible waiver approach to the simulcasting requirement, allow for the temporary use of available in-band vacant channels to further the transition, and to wait until the end of the transition to implement changes to Significantly Viewed status based on ATSC 3.0 signals.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JP' or similar, written in a cursive style.

Meredith Corporation

Joshua N. Pila

General Counsel – Local Media Group